

Message Text

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TAGS: MPOL, YO, US

SUBJECT: PRESS INQUIRIES ON ALLEGED OVERFLIGHTS OF YUGO-
SLAVIA

1. THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT HAS RECEIVED TWO QUESTIONS ON
THE INCIDENT INVOLVING ALLEGED US OVERFLIGHTS OF YUGOSLAVIA
IN NOVEMBER, 1977. THE TEXTS OF THE QUESTIONS AND THE
APPROVED REPLY LANGUAGE ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Q. WOULD YOU REMIND US OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES CONCERNING
THE OVERFLIGHT OF YUGOSLAVIA BY US MILITARY AIRCRAFT WITHIN
THE PAST YEAR, AND IS IT TRUE THAT THIS RESULTED IN THE
CANCELLATION OF A US NAVY PORT VISIT?

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PAGE 02 STATE 079872

A. THERE WAS A QUESTION LAST YEAR OF OVERFLIGHTS OF YUGO-
SLAV TERRITORY BY US NAVY CARRIER AIRCRAFT OPERATING IN THE
ADRIATIC. OUR INVESTIGATION SATISFIED US THAT THERE WAS NO
OVERFLIGHT OF YUGOSLAV TERRITORY. THERE HAS BEEN NO CAN-
CELLATION OR POSTPONEMENT OF US NAVY PORT VISITS TO YUGO-
SLAVIA. WE HAVE NOTHING FURTHER TO ADD.

Q. CONCERNING THE INCIDENT WITH US CARRIER FLIGHT OPERATIONS IN THE ADRIATIC, DID THE US SEND A HIGH-RANKING MILITARY OFFICER TO PLACATE THE YUGOSLAVS? DID THE YUGOSLAVS

THREATEN TO SHOOT DOWN US AIRCRAFT?

A. THE YUGOSLAV GOVERNMENT MADE STRONG REPRESENTATIONS TO THE US GOVERNMENT WHEN IT BELIEVED THAT UNAUTHORIZED OVERFLIGHTS OF ITS TERRITORY WERE OCCURRING. THE YUGOSLAV GOVERNMENT, LIKE OTHER GOVERNMENTS, WAS CONCERNED WITH ENSURING THAT OTHER NATIONS RESPECT ITS BORDERS. AS SOON AS WE LEARNED OF YUGOSLAV GOVERNMENT CONCERN THE US CONDUCTED AN IMMEDIATE AND THOROUGH INQUIRY. THIS REVIEW ESTABLISHED TO OUR SATISFACTION THAT THERE WERE NO VIOLATIONS OF YUGOSLAV TERRITORIAL AIRSPACE. THERE WERE NO INCIDENTS WHICH THREATENED THE SAFETY OF ANY AIRCRAFT INVOLVED. BOTH WE AND THE YUGOSLAV GOVERNMENT, FROM THE VERY FIRST EXPRESSION OF CONCERN, FELT THE BEST WAY OF CLEARING UP THE ISSUE WAS TO HAVE DIRECT TALKS. THESE TALKS WERE CONDUCTED IN BELGRADE AND A SENIOR US MILITARY OFFICIAL PARTICIPATED. WE ARE SATISFIED THAT THE ISSUE IS NOW COMPLETELY RESOLVED.

2. IN ADDITION, DOD PROVIDED ORAL CONFIRMATION TO A PRESS INQUIRY THAT THE USS AMERICA VISITED DUBROVNIK IN LATE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 STATE 079872

NOVEMBER, 1977 AND LATER CONDUCTED FLIGHT OPERATIONS.

3. THUS FAR NO PRESS STORIES HAVE APPEARED ON THE SUBJECT. THE YUGOSLAV EMBASSY HAS BEEN FURNISHED THE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS. COOPER

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